

A peep into the Victorian Image Collection

Part 11 – Babies

By Ron Cosens



A lovely and loving big sister



Rare photograph of a naked Victorian baby

Gallery

All photographs have been dated from studio details.

Cartes de Visite (cdv)



Nurse & baby
(cdv 1865 Slingsby)



Ada Jane Ilbury
aged 13 months
(cdv c1863 Worthing)



Baby's dress tied to her shoes
(cdv c1877 Ashton-under-Lyne)



At Home portrait
in a lovely crib
(cdv c1897 Rushden)

Following on from the last edition – weddings – perhaps we should look this time at babies.

As we all know, Victorians generally had large families, partly because of the lack of modern methods of birth control; and numerous census returns show that most upper class and middle class parents employed a live-in nanny or servant to help out.

Incidentally, poorer families often had to pay for a 'Monthly Nurse' who actually lived in for a few weeks to care for the mother and the child during the birth and for a few weeks thereafter – there was no NHS in those days.

Life for Victorian children was very different from today. Babies in rich households had plenty of toys to play with but babies in poorer households often had to make do with toys that were homemade.

Of course, a new addition to the family was often a joyous occasion and many of our photographs today show how they were cared for and cherished - often by their older siblings.

Babies are not always easy to photograph and their safety was, as always, of paramount importance. Because of this, many portraits included specially shaped chairs to keep the babies safe whilst, in other cases, they were sometimes tied in with string or ribbon!

Sadly, deaths of mothers and babies through premature or still births often occurred because of the poor health of the mother with an infant mortality rate of about 150 per thousand in England and Wales. Death was also frequently caused by common diseases and accidents. Many a tombstone tells the sad story of the death of more than one infant in the same family. We will talk more about this aspect in a later episode.

Stop Press - More information on Soldiers (PW 165)

In PW 165 we looked at Soldiers. Having a website invites all sorts of contacts and I was lucky enough recently to correspond with Michael Prevezer. He is a specialist regarding army uniforms and he kindly commented on some of my captions as follows 'the chap in highland dress with sword taken at York is in fancy dress, not a soldier, and the group at Cleckheaton is not an infantry squad but a Yeomanry cavalry squad, I think from the Yorkshire Hussars'. He also identified most of the other regiments and I am very happy to pass on the information to any of our members. Michael can be contacted at mikeprevezer@gmail.com.

Cabinet Cards



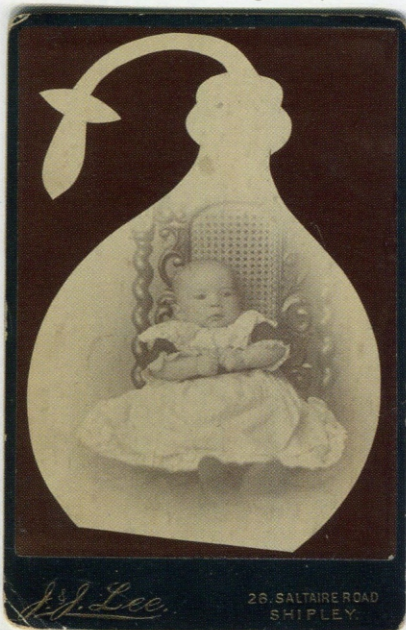
Hand colouring instructions - blue eyes, dark eyebrows & light hair (cab c1875 Brighton)



Chubby chap (cab c1886 Eastbourne)



Perfect pose to show off baby (cab c1891 Colchester)



Baby in a bottle (cab c1892 Shipley)



Tucked up in a magnificent pram and lovely lace (cab c1895 Unknown)



Feeding time in a mechanical chair (cab 1897 Sheffield)



Leslie Gordon Moyle aged 6 months (cab 1904 London W)



Portrait in a special baby chair (cab c1905 Birmingham)



Nice informal portrait by a lady photographer (cab c1907 Clutton near Bristol)

You can find more of these wonderful images on the dedicated page on the PCCGB website: <https://bit.ly/3NZ8yDx>

further images and information: ron.cosens@btinternet.com or www.cartedevite.co.uk